

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 HA-05 PM-05 ACDA-12 MCE-00

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

INFO/SECSTATE WASHDC 6317

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 405

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BH, CU, GT

SUBJECT: CUBA AND BELIZE

REF: GUATEMALA 2381

FOLLOWING IS OUR SUMMARY OF CUBAN/BELIZEAN STATE OF
PLAY. NO OBJECTION, IF YOU WISH PASS IT ALONG TO
GUATEMALANS.

1. CUBAN RUMORS AROUND HERE. FOR MOST PART, THEY ARE
ABSURD. OPPOSITION UDP GIVES CREDENCE TO SOME OF LESS WILD
STORIES AND PERSON IN STREET SWALLOWS SOME MORE. AVERAGE
BELIZEAN APPEARS TO BE RATHER CONSERVATIVE IN POLITICAL
OUTLOOK.

2. DURING RECENTLY COMPLETED MEETING OF CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT
AND COOPERATION COUNCIL, A BIGGISH CUBAN DELEGATION WAS IN
TOWN HEADED BY FNU MELENDEZ. OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER REPORTS
HAD IT THAT MELENDEZ TRAVELLED RATHER EXTENSIVELY IN BELIZE
ACCOMPANIED BY ATTY. GENERAL SHOMAN WHO IS, OF COURSE,
CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE LEFTIST OR MARXIST. PUP SENATOR
SAID MUSA, OF SIMILAR POLITICAL ILK, REPORTEDLY WAS ALSO
IN ATTENDANCE.

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3. LOCAL NEWSPAPER AMANDALA WHICH SUPPORTS PUP AND PRICE
IN GENERAL TERMS WHILE RESERVING RIGHT TO SCOLD WHEN IT
WISHES RAN EDITORIAL APRIL 21 "CUBA AND BELIZE". THRUST
WAS, IN THEIR WORDS, CUBA SI COMMUNISM NO. PAPER WELCOMES
CUBAN SUPPORT ON INDEPENDENCE ISSUE BUT FIRMLY REJECTS COMMUNISM
AS PHILOSOPHY FOR DEVELOPMENT.

4. THIS SEEMS TO US TO BE REASONABLE REFLECTION OF PRICE'S PERSONAL BELIEFS. THERE HAVE BEEN STORIES IN PAST THAT HE IS STRONGLY ATTRACTED TO CASTRO AND CUBA JUST AS THERE HAVE BEEN STORIES THAT HE IS UNDER SWAY OF GUATEMALANS. WE BELIEVE NEITHER. IF HE CAN GET CUBAN SUPPORT IN AREA AND IN INTERNATIONAL FORA FOR INDEPENDENCE QUESTION, HE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ACCEPT IT. AND WHY NOT? PRICE IS SMART POLITICIAN AND HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME. HE IS SENSITIVE TO BOTH GUATEMALAN AND US FEELINGS ON THIS MATTER AND PROBABLY FULLY AWARE THAT CUBAN PRESENCE HERE WOULD GREATLY ANTAGONIZE GUATEMALANS AND MAKE INDEPENDENCE NEGOTIATIONS ALL THE MORE COMPLICATED AND POST INDEPENDENCE RELATIONS ALL THE MORE TENSE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE HE WOULD ACCEPT CUBANS IN HIS SO-CALLED MULTI-LATERAL FORCE AND WE ARE CONVINCED UK WOULD REACT IN EMPHATICALLY NEGATIVE WAY SHOULD HE EVEN CONSIDER SO DOING. GOVERNOR IN TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH ME HAS HELD UP CUBAN SCARECROW AND NO DOUBTS PASSES SIMILAR VIEWS TO LONDON.

5. THERE MAY BE SOME HERE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE STRONGER CUBAN INFLUENCE IN BELIZE. SHOMAN WOULD PROBABLY BE SELECTED AS NUMBER ONE LOCAL RADICAL/LEFTIST/WHATEVER. HIS BACKGROUND TO SOME EXTENT JUSTIFIES HIS REPUTATION BUT WE REMAIN A BIT SCEPTICAL. CERTAINLY IT CAN BE SAID HE HIGHEST RANKING BELIZEAN WITH THIS GENERAL POLITICAL FEELING. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. FINALLY, WE NOTE PRESENCE HERE OF GUATEMALAN CONSUL GENERAL WHO IS OF MILITARY BACKGROUND AND SAID TO BE HIGHLY REGARDED IN GUATEMALA CITY (ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT HIGHLY ENOUGH TO GET THE TRANSFER HE SO DESPERATELY WANTS). HE TAKES VERY STRONG COMMUNIST PENETRATION LINE AND QUITE POSSIBLY FEEDS THE ALREADY EXISTING FEARS IN GUATEMALA CITY. NALLE

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